



# College & Career Readiness

Implementation Strategies  
for High Impact

Case Studies • 2016

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*College & Career Readiness: Implementation Strategies for High Impact*

Design by John Hall Design Group

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# Pearson's Efficacy Program: Welcome Letter

Dear Colleague,

At Pearson, we define **efficacy** as a measurable impact on improving lives through learning. We are embarked on a global education initiative and are dedicated to the pursuit of improved learner outcomes.

On the following pages, you'll find data-driven implementation case studies co-developed by fellow educators and our Efficacy Results team. Each case study offers a blueprint for helping learners achieve mastery in academic, life, and career skills. Findings from these case studies help us understand and communicate to other users the best practices and results of educators' implementations. We do not compensate case study participants.

Looking for more case studies? Visit our **Results Library**, an online repository of more than 400 case studies documenting the impact of educational best practices and Pearson digital solutions on learner outcomes. Filter by discipline, product, institution type, course format, or state/province to find a match.

Please be in touch to ask questions about Pearson's efficacy commitment and to share your ideas, your best practices, or your results with Pearson products and services. To learn more about partnering with us on a case study, please refer to our **Efficacy Support** services. We look forward to hearing from you!

With very best regards,

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## Efficacy Support—Partnering with Pearson

At Pearson, we believe that learning is a life-changing opportunity and that education should have a measurable impact on learners' lives. We not only hold ourselves accountable for the products we make, but we also work closely with educators to learn from, document and share their learner experiences and outcomes through implementation and results case studies.

### What are Implementation and Results Case Studies?

Implementation and results case studies share actual implementation practices and evaluate possible relationships between program implementation and student performance. The findings are not meant to imply causality or generalizability within or beyond these specific instances. Rather, they can begin to provide informed considerations for implementation and adaptation decisions in other user contexts. For the case studies in this report, mixed-methods designs were applied, and the data collected included qualitative data from interviews, quantitative program usage analytics, and student performance data. Open-ended interviews were used to guide data collection.

### Why Is Pearson Interested in Case Studies?

These case studies have helped educators over the past decade understand more about the teaching and learning experience, and use data to inform implementation modifications to improve learner outcomes and determine what is most relevant about their implementation and results. This in turn helps us improve our products and enables us to share blueprints of best practices with other educators seeking new ways to increase student success and continuously improve.

Are you being asked to report on student learning outcomes? Implementing a course redesign? Wondering what impact your Pearson digital solution is having on overall program goals? Pearson wants to partner with you. Your results—and the best practices you used to achieve them—can be helpful and inspiring to your peers.

### The Case Study Process—Partnering with Pearson

Every study project is unique. The process takes time—generally a semester or longer. Instructors interested in conducting studies should expect an interactive and rewarding partnership. To maintain objectivity, Pearson does not offer compensation for participation in case studies.

1. Overview call with Pearson efficacy results manager to discuss goals and research questions, identify measures of success, and agree on next steps.
2. Pearson provides planning guidelines, data collection tools, and sample surveys to share with students and faculty both at the start and end of your course.
3. Submission of quantitative and qualitative results and discussion of outcomes. Your Pearson efficacy results managers and data analysts are ready to assist with data analysis, to document implementation best practices, and to help define next steps.
4. Pearson completes the case study and sends it to the instructor for review and approval.
5. Pearson publishes the case study on its **Results Library**.

### Pearson Results Library

The Pearson Results Library is a comprehensive collection of evidence-based case studies. Each case study documents the impact of educator best practices and Pearson digital solutions on student learning. Visit the Results Library at [www.pearsonmylabandmastering.com/results](http://www.pearsonmylabandmastering.com/results).

### Questions to Consider

- What issues and challenges are you trying to address?
- What quantifiable outcomes are you trying to achieve?
- How will you measure these outcomes?
- How will you implement your chosen Pearson digital product to generate results?

### What Quantitative Results Can Be Measured?

We can help you gauge the impact that your implementation, taken holistically, is having on your students' learning and course success. The results you measure with the full support of our data analysts may include but are not limited to:

- Relationship between homework completion and scores and final exams (or final course grades)
- Comparison of test averages, pass rates, success rates, or retention rates over semesters
- Accelerated completion of remedial courses
- Completion and achievement in subsequent courses

### Don't Forget About Qualitative Observations

- Students coming to class more prepared and more engaged
- Improved class discussions; students asking higher-level questions
- Student ownership of learning, demonstration of agency and purpose in pursuit of academic goals

### To learn more, contact your Pearson Efficacy Results Manager:

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## An Interview with Mike Rose

Nationally acclaimed writer and educator Mike Rose is a professor at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and the author of many influential books, including *Lives on the Boundary*, *Why School?*, *The Mind at Work*, and *Possible Lives*.

Lauren Gill, Senior Efficacy Results Manager for College & Career Readiness at Pearson Education, interviewed Professor Rose in September 2015 at the time of the release of the paperback edition of Rose's widely praised book, *Back to School: Why Everyone Deserves a Second Chance at Education, Succeeding in College Against the Odds* 2015, The New Press, New York.

**LG:** Who goes to college today and why? How should we update our mental image of the typical college student to reflect contemporary reality?

**MR:** Media focus on what's wrong in higher education tends to examine research universities and elite colleges—and to focus on the traditional 18 year-old graduating from high school and heading toward dorm life and a bachelor's degree. But this segment of higher ed, important though it is, reflects the experience of only a small minority of college students. Most education beyond high school in the United States goes on not in the top 50 colleges and universities but in state universities and local four-year and 2-year colleges. Increasingly, postsecondary students in the U.S. are not coming to college directly from high school, are not attending full-time, and are absolutely not eighteen or nineteen.

Students who are labeled “non-traditional” are in fact, rapidly becoming the norm. It's not uncommon to find a single parent in her late 20s juggling full- or part-time work with family responsibilities and her studies. These returning students, who may have had a difficult prior experience with school, come to higher education for a second chance.

**LG:** If a significant number of postsecondary students are adult learners who are returning to education with life/work experience but perhaps some gaps in their academic skills or a lack of confidence based on prior school experience, is our higher ed system in the U.S. configured to meet students' needs? In other words, are postsecondary programs aligned to students' actual aspirations?

**MR:** Yes and no. There are some institutional barriers to student success. Many colleges are hard to navigate. Guidelines and requirements for matriculation, financial aid, or transfer lack coherence and consistency. Advising resources are often scarce and fragmented. Course sequences and requirements can be confusing. These obstacles place the heaviest burden, as you might imagine, on returning students who struggled in their previous school experience, on English language learners, and on students whose work and family obligations limit the time they can spend on campus seeking information and resources. On the other hand, when advisors, faculty, and administrators coordinate their efforts to guide students and to create curricula that directly address student needs—and there are many institutions doing this—students and communities benefit.

Another concern is that aggregated rates of completion of degrees and rates of transfer don't reflect the multiple reasons people go to a community college—and why they leave. Students may declare the intention, upon entering, to pursue a particular degree program. But completion of a few courses may be enough to secure a promotion at work. Or a student may quit in pursuit of a more desirable career or educational opportunity. Counted as dropouts, these students may be portrayed as failures. But a closer look reveals that many students achieve their goals without completing a degree program, at least not the one they originally declared.

Hugely important stories about postsecondary education are playing out in community colleges, adult education programs, and occupational training centers. I wrote *Back to School* to tell some of these stories—and to point to the importance of these stories not only for the students themselves but also for our collective societal and economic well-being.

**LG:** In your book, you explore the academic-vocational divide. This is really a false dichotomy, isn't it?

**MR:** Yes. Education and job creation are not an either/or proposition. Just as students learn basic citizenship alongside reading and arithmetic in K-12 (how to share, how to respect themselves and others), students in higher education are acquiring learning of many kinds—how to live and how to make a living. In traditional liberal arts courses like history and political science, students gain perspectives on society and their own place in it. Some students join clubs or get jobs on campus—these opportunities give students access to new

bodies of knowledge and a means to develop social networks. One study suggests that nearly 20 percent of community college students decide to pursue further education after enrolling in their 2-year institution. Community colleges and other second-chance programs for adult learners can develop skills and build knowledge that lead to employment but also provide a number of other personal, social, and civic benefits. There is an economic rationale for championing these programs, but school is about more than a paycheck.

**LG:** I want to ask about your methodology. You interweave narrative and data to create a more authentic picture, and your stories about real students communicate what statistics alone cannot illuminate. It strikes me that your approach points to an ethical responsibility for us to go beyond treating as important what is easily measured (drop out rates, for instance) and instead pursue ways to measure and document what is genuinely important.

**MR:** I am concerned that broadcasting dire statistics about failures in our education system can, over time, breed a sense of hopelessness among the public and among policy makers—and that the withdrawal of funding may follow. The challenge as I see it is to be clear-eyed and vigilant about the performance of our second-chance institutions but to use methods of investigation that capture a fuller story of the institutions and the people in them. What we lack in much of the reporting I see is the blending of the statistical table with portraits of actual lives. We need to find, study, and broadcast the many examples of successful work being done daily and build our analysis and our solutions on illustrations of the possible. The educators and students I've observed and come to know affirm the transformational potential of the college classroom, the occupational workshop, the tutoring center, the mentoring relationship.

**LG:** There are many powerful stories in your book. Perhaps you would tell us just one of those stories?

**MR:** Sure. I've spent quite a lot of time observing classes. Not long ago, I visited an Adult Basic Education class in a local adult school. One teacher and two instructional aides worked with twenty students. Most of the students were in their twenties and thirties, but several students were older, and one woman was in her sixties. Five of the students were native English speakers, including a man who could read at only a first- or second-grade level. The students were predominantly Latino

or African American, two were Filipino, and one young woman was from Poland. All were working to improve their English, and some wished to continue all the way to earning a GED certificate. As the counselor told me, all of the students have a goal in mind—they are trying to change their lives.

I spent a few minutes observing as an instructional aide worked on basic reading with an African American man in his mid-forties. He barely attended school as a boy growing up in the rural Midwest, I learned, and supported himself as a laborer. He was recently released from prison and has attended this class regularly, determined to learn to read. The man reads deliberately, with a firm voice, and the aide tells me that she has noticed the man's posture become straighter in recent months.

I see a striking diversity of skills and backgrounds in the room—from people who earned postsecondary degrees in their countries of origin to the reading student who barely attended school, and from young people just beginning their adult lives to a grandmother who attends so that she can keep her mind alert. The teacher shares with me that one of his favorite things is seeing an eighteen year-old African American kid joining in friendship around a common goal with a middle-aged mother from Central America or Southeast Asia. These bonds form naturally in classrooms like the one I visited—but there aren't enough places in our society where that can happen.

**LG:** When my children were young, the most profound transformation I witnessed was their passage from non-reader to reader. I watched my kids literally become more fully themselves, more vibrantly human as they became readers. That creative transformation that comes through learning is a powerful engine for individuals and for our country. Your vision is finally a hopeful one, yes?

**MR:** Yes it is. What education can do, what perhaps only education can do, is transform us so that we live more fully. Throughout our history, we have affirmed that schooling at any age has multiple benefits for self and society. In *Back to School*, I've given frank descriptions of misguided or poorly conceived policies and their consequences. But there are so many educators and institutions committing intellect and heart to help students realize their aspirations—and succeeding. Those stories provide blueprints we can follow to offer more inclusive access to the transformative power of learning.

School Name	Grand Rapids Community College, Grand Rapids, MI
Course Name	FastTrack/OnTrack Program
Course Format	Lab-based; emporium; modular; non-credit-based remediation

**Key Results** 78 percent of referred students have completed the English and Reading FastTrack/OnTrack programs, and 70 percent of those students successfully retested on the Accuplacer and placed out of developmental education, thus saving \$505,800 in tuition and 52,266 contact hours.

#### Submitted by

John Cowles, Dean, Student Success and Retention  
Domingo Hernandez-Gomez, Director College Success Center

#### Course materials

Reading: MyFoundationsLab  
Writing: MyWritingLab

#### Setting

Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) is an urban, public institution currently enrolling 15,700 undergraduate students annually on one main campus and four satellite locations. In fall 2014, 32.2 percent of students attended school full-time, Hispanic students comprised 9.9 percent of the student body, and African-American students 10.8 percent.<sup>1</sup>

As part of an on-going commitment to student success, GRCC joined the Achieving the Dream initiative in 2010 to identify new strategies to improve student success. Throughout its 100-year history, GRCC has maintained a solid reputation as a premier transfer institution and is nationally recognized for both its liberal arts and occupational programs.

#### Challenges and Goals

In fall 2011, 51 percent of the entering class needed developmental education, and 48 percent of students taking developmental courses were successful in moving on to credit-bearing courses. Improving the success and retention rates for students placing into developmental education has long been a goal at GRCC. In 2012, we created FastTrack with the support of a U.S. Department of Education Title III grant. The FastTrack program is designed to help First-Time In Any College (FTIAC) students bypass developmental education with an emphasis on retention and completion.

The goals of the FastTrack program are to:

- Achieve a FastTrack completion rate of 70 percent or higher.
- Achieve a FastTrack success rate (bypassing developmental course) of 60 percent or higher.
- Reduce the incidence of developmental education from the 2011 rate of 51 percent.
- Increase retention of FastTrack students over non-FastTrack developmental students.
- Increase the college-wide retention rate.
- Increase the success rate for students in any developmental education course over the 2011 rate of 48 percent.

#### Implementation

FastTrack is an intensive three-week, 14-hour per week learning lab in which students remediate English, reading, or math skills through a combination of web-based and tutor-guided activities. Reading FastTrack labs use MyFoundationsLab and English labs use MyWritingLab (as of summer 2015). We selected Pearson MyLabs because of their ability to accelerate skill building and provide personalized, mastery-based learning.

The FastTrack program includes two levels of coursework: FastTrack and OnTrack. FastTrack is for students falling at the high end of the developmental spectrum/placement score. OnTrack is for students who are squarely in the developmental range. Eligible students are referred to the FastTrack program at either the FastTrack or OnTrack level once they have completed the Accuplacer exam. The program is free for new students who have at least one score that falls within the required ranges (Table 1).

We offer three different start dates for summer FastTrack courses, and one each in the spring and fall semesters. In the summer, 550–600 students enroll, in fall 100–120, and in

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2014/11/grcc\\_charts.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2014/11/grcc_charts.html)

*Across the institution, we have reduced the number of developmental courses by 38 sections, and we calculate that revenue has increased by more than \$300,000 by way of retention.*

Subject	Accuplacer Score Range	Developmental Score	College-Ready Scores	Target Scores for FastTrack (FT) / OnTrack (OT)*
Reading	0-120	0-70	71-120	55-70 (FT); 40-52.4 (OT)
English	0-8	0-4	5-8	4 (FT) 3 (OT)

Table 1. Accuplacer Scores for Students Referred to the FastTrack Program

spring 40–50. Students may only enroll in one lab at a time. Each FastTrack lab has an enrollment capacity of 22 students. Students attend lab Monday through Thursday for 3-1/2 hours each day for three weeks. Highly-trained professional tutors act as session facilitators. Within the context of the review session, the facilitators play a guiding role, answering clarifying questions about the program and general concepts, rather than providing answers to content-related questions.

**Reading:** The reading review session focuses on reading comprehension, vocabulary skills, and fluency. The content of MyFoundationsLab has been modified to cover thirty-seven topics/course objectives.

**English:** The English session focuses on the following topics: sentence skills, punctuation, mechanics, spelling, usage and style, and the craft of writing. The content of MyWritingLab has been modified to cover twenty-five topics/program objectives.

On the first day of the session, students take the Path Builder diagnostic in the MyLab and begin to master topics based on their Path Builder results. Students must gain mastery (80 percent or higher) in all required topics.

A typical day involves a brief question and answer period, two hours of work in the MyLab, and two 30-minute discussions or activities—led by the facilitator—to help students better understand the material. Students must also demonstrate proper Cornell note-taking skills in the course. During every session, students take notes on the content and turn them in for the facilitator to review.

In addition to working in the MyLab, students are required to:

- Attend a one-on-one conference with the lab facilitator to review work.
- Work with a college success coach (follow-up/monitoring, classroom visits).

- Attend a new student orientation.
- Complete the financial aid application process (if applicable).
- Complete a student success plan with an advisor or counselor.
- Complete the “Roadmap to Success” (a pre-semester checklist).
- Take an affective assessment.

Students complete the course by taking the Mastery Check in the MyLab and are then eligible to retake the Accuplacer exam for that subject. If a student’s score falls into the college-ready range (Table 1), he or she can then move directly into college-level courses. Students do not earn credit for the FastTrack program. The incentive to participate is the opportunity to bypass developmental education, saving a substantial amount of time and money.

## Results and Data

The FastTrack program (including OnTrack) has shown great promise at GRCC. Since 2012, 1016 students have been recruited for the English and Reading programs, and 789 students have finished—a 78 percent completion rate. About 10 percent of students finish the program early (in the second week). Of 789 completers, 552 were successful in their retake of the placement test and were able to avoid one or more developmental education course, a success rate of 70 percent (Table 2).

The FastTrack program specifically targets First-Time In Any College (FTIAC) students. Between 2012–2014, FTIAC students comprised 62 percent of all students needing developmental education ( $N=8,164$ ). Of these 5,089 FTIAC students, 20 percent ( $n=1,013$ ) were served by the FastTrack program.

While the primary objective of the FastTrack program is to lower the incidence of students needing to take developmental

Program	Subject	Students Recruited	Students Completing	Completion Rate	Successful Students*	Success Rate
FastTrack	English	548	418	76%	300	72%
	Reading	292	241	83%	155	64%
OnTrack	English	85	57	67%	54	95%
	Reading	91	73	80%	43	59%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,016 students</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>70%</b>

Table 2. FastTrack and OnTrack Results, 2012–2015 (English/Reading only) *Please note:* The success rate is calculated based on the number of students completing the program who re-tested on the Accuplacer and placed out of developmental education.

education courses, a secondary goal—for students who don't test out after the three-week program—is to increase the eventual success rate of students who do take developmental education courses. We believe the FastTrack and OnTrack programs have played a part in achieving these goals to date (Figure 1). Each year, the percent of students needing developmental education has decreased while the percent of students succeeding in developmental education courses has increased subsequent to participating in the FastTrack program (Figure 2).

Since implementing the program, students have saved 52,266 contact hours and \$505,800 for bypassing placement into developmental education. Additionally, financial aid eligibility has been extended to these students. The program has also benefitted students by giving them experience with the culture and environment of college.

Across the institution, we have reduced the number of developmental courses by 38 sections. We calculate, using the Noel-Levitz Retention Revenue Estimator, that revenue has increased by more than \$300,000 by way of retention.

### The Student Experience

Though FastTrack has been well received by our students, many continue to face challenges despite access to the FastTrack program, including socioeconomic challenges, test anxiety, and awareness and understanding of the placement test and developmental education program.

Ninety-four percent of students who completed English/Reading FastTrack/OnTrack courses responded to our survey about their experience at the end of the summer 2015 session. Figure 3 highlights summary data from this survey.

The following quotes highlight specific feedback on Pearson MyLabs from the student survey:

- “They [the modules] caught me up on a lot of things I forgot.”
- “The fact that it was easy to get on to from any computer was wonderful. I enjoyed working on the modules at home.”

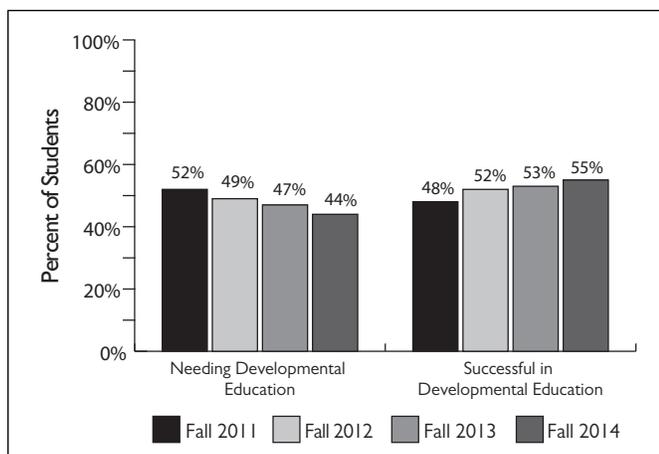


Figure 1. Percent of All Students (Not Just FTIAC) Needing Developmental Education and Percent of Students Successful in Developmental Education (English, Reading, and/or Math): Fall 2011 (n = 3,231) Fall 2012 (n = 2,813) Fall 2013 (n = 2,923) Fall 2014 (n = 2,428)

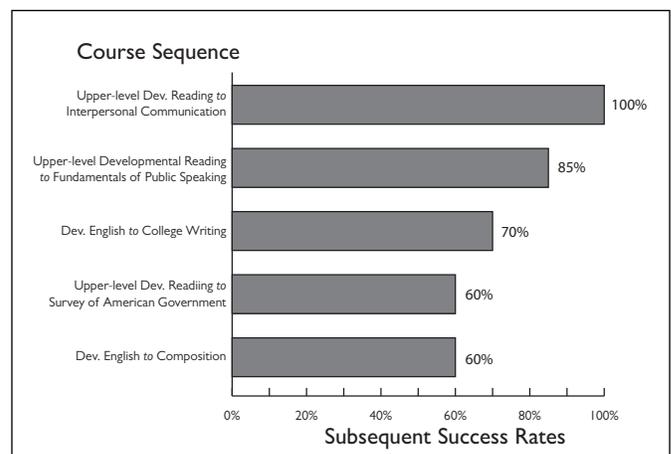


Figure 2. Developmental Course Success Rates for FastTrack Students, 2012–2014. From top to bottom (n = 9); (n = 13); (n = 126); (n = 20); (n = 55)

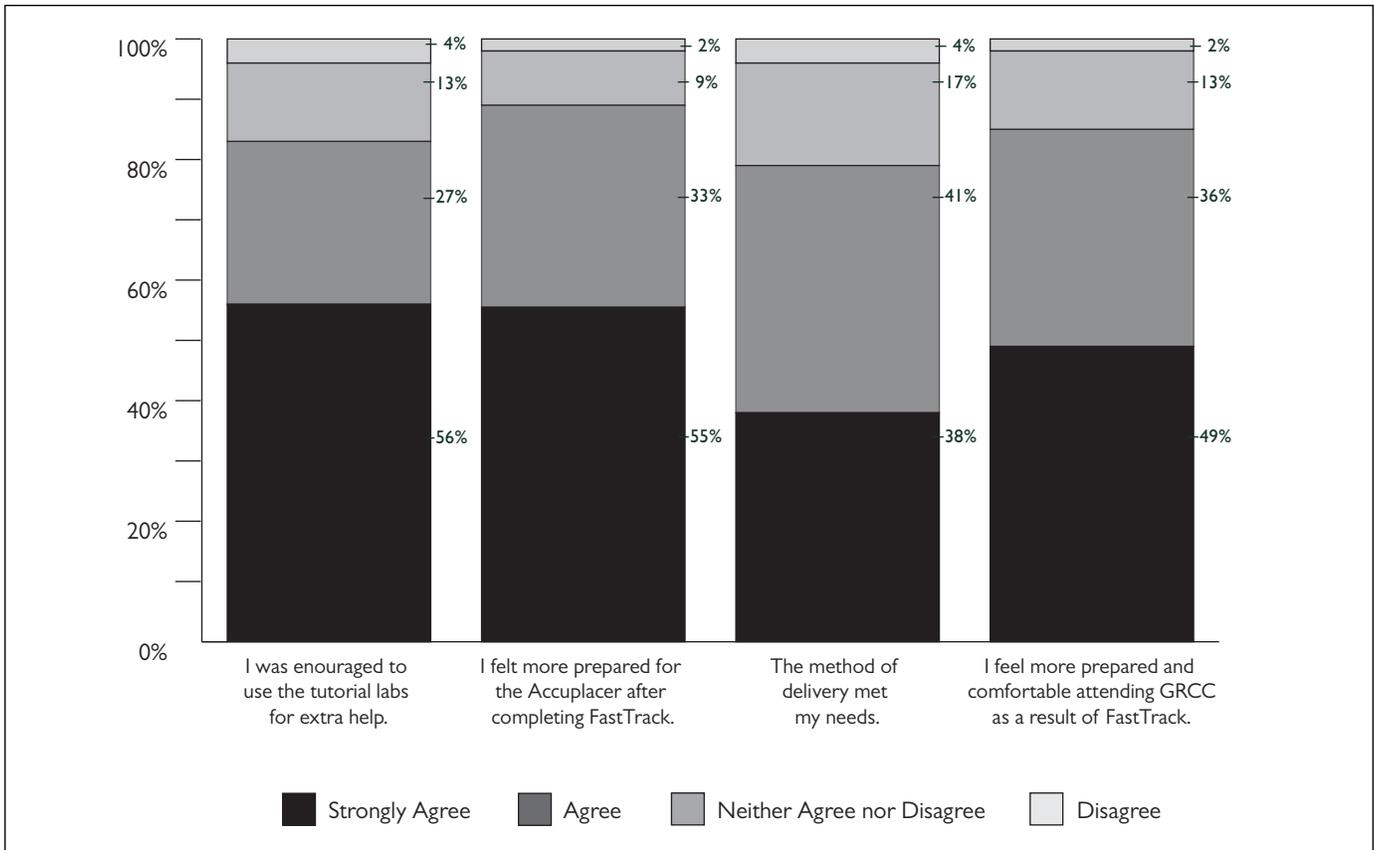


Figure 3. Student Survey Responses for English and Reading FastTrack Programs, Summer 2015 (n = 254)

- “I enjoyed the modules and how I could re-do them if I got something wrong and (then do) it better the next time.”
- “I loved the fact that there were videos to watch and the quizzes along with them.”
- “My favorite part of the FastTrack program was the modules. The modules not only helped me so much in understanding the basics of writing but also helped by breaking down each little thing in an essay. They also helped because I could get them done at the time I wanted.”

## Conclusion

FastTrack could be adapted at other institutions. At GRCC, the per-student cost for a three-week session averages \$104. This cost includes a professional tutor to facilitate the session, a peer tutor to assist, Accuplacer retake cost, software, and materials.

Although our Title III grant expires in September 2016, it is our intent to institutionalize this program. We are already paying for some of the program costs, but we see this as a valuable investment.

**For more information on the FastTrack program, please visit:**

<http://www.grcc.edu/collegesuccesscenter/fasttrackontrackprogram>

<http://www.grcc.edu/communications/press/grccsfasttrackprogramreceivesnationalaward>

School Name Honolulu Community College, Honolulu, HI

Course Name Compass Boot Camp

Course Format Hybrid

**Key Results** After Boot Camp with MyFoundationsLab, 35.6 percent of students tested out of the lowest level of developmental math; 75 percent of students tested out of developmental writing; and 82.8 percent of students tested out of developmental reading. In subsequent courses, Boot Camp students who were promoted achieved an average 63 percent success rate.

#### Program director

Kristi Teruya, Academic Coach

#### Course materials

MyFoundationsLab, some custom worksheets

#### Background

Honolulu Community College (HCC) is an integral part of the University of Hawai'i and offers an affordable, flexible, open-door education to residents of the city, state, and region it serves.

#### Challenges and goals

Recognizing a need for personalized, just-in-time remediation among incoming students with low Compass exam scores, Honolulu Community College obtained grant funding to help create a Compass Boot Camp program. The program launched in summer 2014.

Incoming students with low scores on the Compass exam met with HCC Academic Counselors during New Student Orientation; a few students were referred by HCC's C.A.R.E. (College Achievement and Retention Experience) Center. In both cases, counselors explained the Boot Camp opportunity and encouraged students to apply. Participation in the three-week Boot Camp qualified students for a free Compass exam re-take. The goal was to increase scores on the Compass exam, enabling students to place out of developmental reading, writing, and/or math—saving both time and money.

Students in the summer 2014 Boot Camp sessions were almost all new, incoming students to HCC. Approximately half of the students were traditionally-aged students enrolling after completing high school. Many of the returning students had been away from a campus environment for decades.

*“With MyFoundationsLab, students quickly take learning into their own hands, gaining skills and confidence that will serve them well in their academic careers.”*

—Kristi Teruya, Academic Coach

#### Implementation

Three Boot Camp sessions, each three weeks long, were held in June and July 2014. Students exercised the option to work on one, two, or all three subjects (reading, writing, and math) during the Boot Camp session. Students choosing all three subjects (51 percent of students) were limited to working on each subject for one week at a time. Attendance was mandatory, and missed classes had to be made up.

Boot Camp was offered in a hybrid format—a combination of self-paced online work and direct instruction or collaborative learning projects. For each subject area, students completed the PathBuilder in a Compass-aligned MyFoundationsLab to generate a personalized Learning Path. During independent work in the lab, math and English faculty were available to assist students one-on-one as needed. Faculty conducted mini-lessons, covering topics that all or most students needed to review. Counselors from the C.A.R.E. Center also conducted College Skills workshops with students.

Students meeting the attendance requirement earned a free Compass exam retake at the end of the session, and those focusing on reading and writing submitted a writing sample as a secondary assessment. The writing sample was evaluated by English department faculty together with the Compass exam score to determine placement out of developmental reading and writing. Students who did not show improvement

**“Boot Camp is a great program for students to increase their learning momentum.”**

—Honolulu Community College student

Subject	Increased Compass Test Scores	Average Score Increase (Points)	Tested Out of Developmental Courses*	Average Amount of Money Saved**	Average Number of Semesters Saved
Reading (n = 29)	57%	6.2	82.8%	\$342	1.0
Writing (n = 32)	84%	15.5	75.0%	\$492	1.5
Math (n = 45)	83%	12.2	35.6%***	\$580	1.0

Table 1. Summer 2014 Boot Camp Results for Students who Earned a Baseline Compass Score, Completed Boot Camp, and Retested on a Compass Exam, (n = 52)

Total Number of Students	Students Promoted	Took Classes Related to Promotion	Total Promotion Success (Earned an A, B, or C)	Math Promotion Success (Earned an A, B, or C)	English Promotion Success (Earned an A, B, or C)
52	38 (73%)	27 (71%)	17 (63%)	50%	68%

Table 2. Fall 2014 English and Math Performance of Students who Participated in Summer 2014 Boot Camp

on the Compass retest were contacted to discuss their test performance and asked to provide suggestions on how Boot Camp may be improved. Students who scored very close (within 1–5 points) to placing out of Math 9 were offered additional math services to prepare for another retake of the Compass exam (with the understanding that they would be responsible for the exam fee.)

Academic Coach Kristi Teruya stated, “MyFoundationsLab offers each student a personalized learning path, focusing study time and enabling students to see progress from the very first day. Students appreciate the immediate feedback and respond positively to the videos and step-by-step explanations. With MyFoundationsLab, students quickly take learning into their own hands, gaining skills and confidence that will serve them well in their academic careers.”

## Results and data

Coach Teruya commented, “I am pleasantly surprised and impressed with the success rates for Boot Camp students. I believe that Boot Camp prepares students for their college coursework while easing the transition to college by engaging students with campus resources and staff prior to starting their first semester. It seems clear that offering students opportunities to better themselves will always have a return on investment.”

## Coach Teruya summarized what worked well...

- By providing a personalized, self-paced learning path with immediate feedback and explanation, MyFoundationsLab helped students to reinforce skills and concepts.
- The writing sample proved a valuable secondary assessment to promote many students out of developmental reading/writing.
- New, incoming students reported that Boot Camp provided a great introduction to HCC’s resources and campus community.
- Students appreciated that HCC offered a free program to assist them in potentially placing into a higher course.

\*Based on Compass score and, for Reading/Writing, writing sample assessment.

\*\*Based on the fall 2014 resident rate of \$114/credit. Math 9 (5 credits): \$570, Math 24/25 (3 credits): \$342, English 19/21/22/60 (3 credits): \$342

\*\*\*35.6% of students tested out of Math 9, the lowest level developmental math course. While the ultimate goal is to accelerate students’ progress out of developmental math altogether and into 100-level math courses, the immediate goal is to advance students out of the lowest level course, Math 9. Many students initially score lower in math than in reading and writing and thus have a steeper deficit to overcome in math. Some students needed to raise their math score by 20+ points to meet the cutoff to place out of Math 9; the average score increase was 12.2 points, meaning that many students missed the cutoff.

*“I am pleasantly surprised and impressed with the success rates for Boot Camp students.”*

*—Kristi Teruya, Academic Coach*

- Even students who did not place out of developmental studies altogether noted that they felt better prepared for their coursework after participating in Boot Camp.
- . . . and where there is room for improvement
  - Students who opted to focus on all three subjects felt that one week was insufficient to fully refresh skills in each subject. One solution is to restrict student choice to Reading/Writing or Math for each Boot Camp session.
  - In Math, a very large class size and wide range of skill needs made it challenging for a single math instructor to adequately address all students' instructional needs. Plans are in place to offer two levels of math and to recruit additional math instructors and tutors to meet student needs.
  - Additional College Skills Workshops targeting basic computer literacy and test-taking skills are under consideration to meet clear student needs.
  - Student motivation and commitment varied. Program staff will set clear and definite expectations for student behavior and conduct at Orientation.

### The learner experience

Forty-eight of the participating students voluntarily completed all or part of a survey at the end of the boot camp.

- 100%** Rated Boot Camp good or great
- 94%** Would recommend Boot Camp to friends
- 89%** Felt better prepared for the Compass exam
- 100%** Rated the mini-lessons taught by instructors helpful
- 89%** Rated the College Skills Workshops (goal-setting, time management, etc.) helpful
- 83%** Of new, incoming students reported that Boot Camp eased anxiety about starting school
- 53%** Said a single, three-week session was insufficient to work on all three skills (reading, writing, and math)

### Selected student comments

- *“Boot Camp is a great program for students to increase their learning momentum.”*
- *“I liked everything about Boot Camp—one-on-one assistance with the teacher if I needed it, and extra time at the lab really helped.”*
- *“I liked the review of math and writing because it helped refresh my memory. I stayed out of school for a year, and I needed something to get me back into the school lifestyle and to score better on the Compass test.”*

### Best practices

#### Advising support

Students whose Compass scores indicated a need for basic skills remediation were recruited to the Boot Camp program by HCC counselors and C.A.R.E. center staff and faculty. During the final week of Boot Camp, a representative from counseling visited with Boot Camp students, encouraging them to meet with a counselor to alter their schedules following their retake of the Compass exam.

#### Personalization

The MyFoundationsLab PathBuilder diagnostic generated a personalized learning path for each student in each skill area selected for study: reading, writing, and math. Students likely maximized learning time by working just on the skill areas not previously mastered.

#### Hybrid course format

The self-paced, online learning in MyFoundationsLab combined with direct, one-on-one or group instruction from faculty kept students engaged, motivated, and on pace.

#### Whole student focus

Evidence suggests that advising support, team-building exercises, and College Skills Workshops administered by C.A.R.E. center staff worked to diminish students' anxiety, orient students to campus life, and prepare students to engage fully in both academic and nonacademic opportunities at HCC.

## Conclusion

Evidence from the summer 2014 Boot Camp and subsequent fall 2014 performance of student participants suggests that Boot Camp is an effective remediation and acceleration intervention. Boot Camp also serves to connect students to campus life in ways that may impact achievement and persistence.

Based on an analysis of student outcomes and on interviews with participating students, instructors, and staff, a number of refinements are planned for future Boot Camps. Math will be segmented into two levels to address basic and more advanced skills needs, staff levels will be increased, and the program will receive earlier, more comprehensive marketing to attract more eligible students.

HCC will continue to track Boot Camp participants' progress to gather additional evidence about the impact of Boot Camp on students' long-term achievement and persistence.

School Name Middlesex Community College & Meriden Board of Education, Meriden, CT

Program Name Intensive College Transition Program – Adult Education Partnership

Program Format Hybrid

**Key Results** Students who completed ICTP needed an average 1.6 fewer developmental courses. Accuplacer and CASAS Pre- and Post-test results indicate consistent learning gains in math and English over six ICTP course starts 2012-2014. Specifically, 81 percent of students improved (and 40 percent tested college-ready) in arithmetic; 17 percent improved (and 18 percent tested college-ready) in algebra; 79 percent improved (and 29 percent tested college-ready) in reading; and 75 percent improved (and 34 percent tested college-ready) in sentence skills.

#### Program Manager

Fred Silbermann, Program Facilitator for Meriden Adult Education

#### Course materials

MyFoundationsLab

#### Setting

A partnership between Middlesex CC's Meriden Center, Meriden Adult Education, and the Connecticut State Department of Education, Intensive College Transition Program (ICTP) is an intensive evening program for adult learners seeking higher education. ICTP helps students strengthen reading, writing, math, and study skills while offering personalized, wraparound advising services designed to identify and ameliorate students' risks to persistence and success.

#### Challenges and goals

In 2011, the State of Connecticut enacted legislation to establish a college transition program to offer high-quality, cost-effective, and accessible pathways to post-secondary education for adults who have a high school degree but do not meet the criteria for entry into community college courses, as measured by the ACCUPLACER assessment. The program aims to increase students' readiness for college and to increase their likelihood of success once they get to college.

Fred Silbermann manages the program at Middlesex Community College / Meriden Adult Education and chose MyFoundationsLab as a personalized learning intervention to refresh and remediate students' skills. In addition to MyFoundationsLab, the Intensive College Transition Program includes a suite of wraparound student services comprising advising, tutoring, mentoring and career preparation.

Program Manager Silbermann states, "Our students enter the ICTP with a wide variety of life and academic experiences. The average age is 33, and 60 percent of students are parents. Many have been away from school for a long time, and most possess significant skills gaps. On average, our adult learners assess at a 10th grade reading level and a 7th grade math level. Half of our students are ELL (English Language Learners.) However, our students are motivated and capable of succeeding in college. Our program is designed to help students transition toward a realization of their academic, career, and life goals."

#### Implementation

Students dual-enroll in Meriden Adult Education and Middlesex Community College (MxCC). Faculty from MxCC teach in the program, with counseling provided by Meriden Adult Education staff. Students work in the lab for three-hour sessions two days per week, pursuing personalized math and English Learning Paths in MyFoundationsLab, and all take a 3-credit Freshman Seminar College Success course. Support clinics are offered three nights per week on ESL, Reading skills and math. Additionally, a 2-hour weekly discussion group offers mentoring support and career prep assistance. The support clinics are voluntary; about one-third of students attend the clinics regularly. Each 14-week ICTP session accepts a maximum of twenty students. Students who complete the ICTP and take the Accuplacer post-test are welcome to enroll in a free STEM course, Introduction to Computer Graphics.

MyFoundationsLab enables students to control their learning activity and to progress at the level at which they are most comfortable. Instructors monitor student progress via the MyFoundationsLab Gradebook, offer one-on-one instruction in specific skill areas as needed, and connect with students regularly to provide support and offer motivation.

*“The ICTP intervention starts the moment the recruiter shakes the hand of a prospective student. The recruiter advises students about the program requirements and conducts a risk test to identify potential barriers to success. That analysis forms the basis of a personalized set of wraparound services aligned to each student’s individual risks, needs, strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations.”*

—Fred Silbermann, Program Manager

Silbermann notes, “The ICTP intervention starts the moment the recruiter shakes the hand of a prospective student. The recruiter advises students about the program requirements and conducts a risk test to identify potential barriers to success. That analysis forms the basis of a personalized set of wraparound services aligned to each student’s individual risks, needs, strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations.”

He continues, “Program staff intentionally model agency, persistence, and pro-social behaviors for students. We recognize and take seriously our responsibilities as role models for students. At the same time, we learn from our students every day. We understand that our students are change agents in their own lives and in the lives of their families and our community. It is our honor and our privilege to work with these adult learners.”

### Results and data

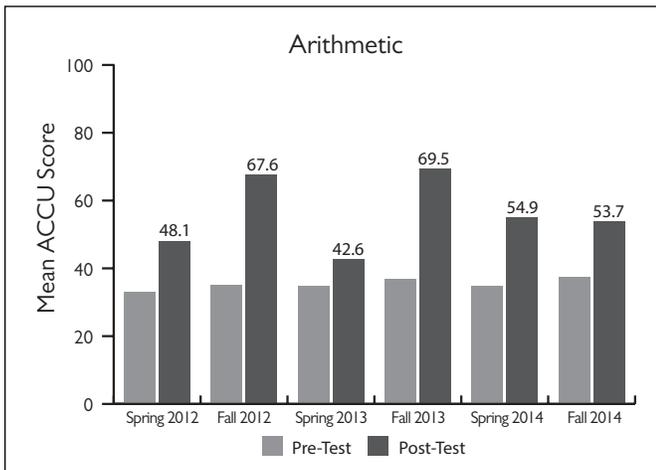


Figure 1. Mean Accuplacer Arithmetic Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores spring 2012-fall 2014 n=77.

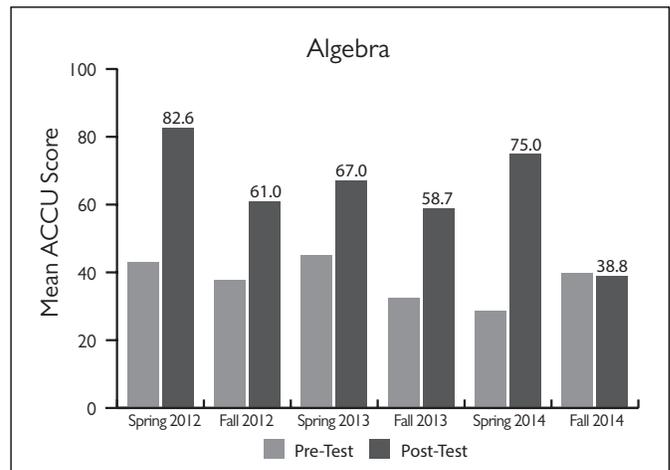


Figure 2. Mean Accuplacer Algebra Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores spring 2012-fall 2014 n=77.

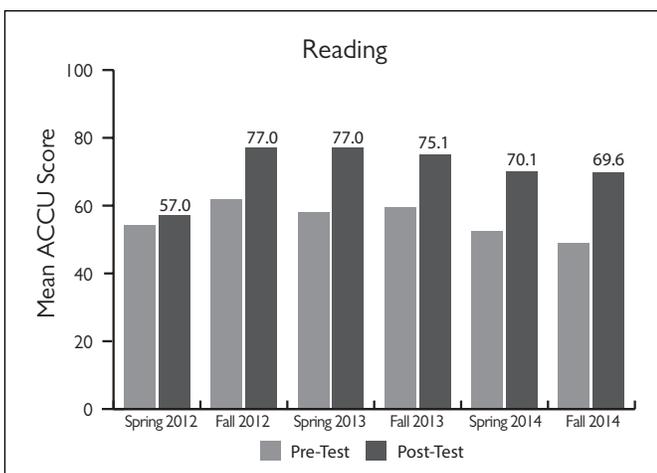


Figure 3. Mean Accuplacer Reading Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores spring 2012-fall 2014 n=77.

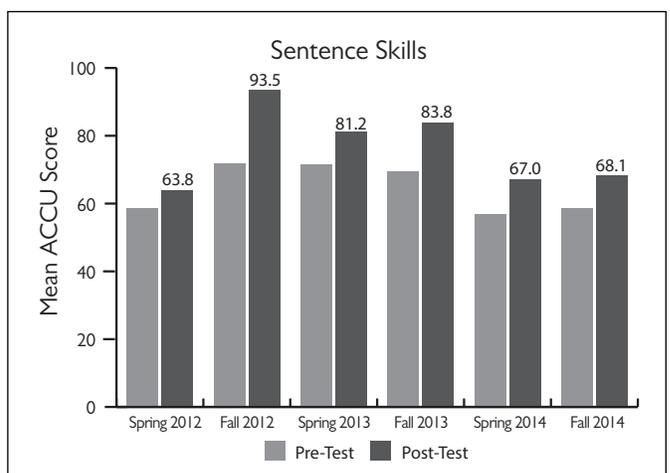


Figure 4. Mean Accuplacer Sentence Skills Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores spring 2012-fall 2014 n=77.

*“We understand that our students are change agents in their own lives and in the lives of their families and our community.”*

*—Fred Silbermann, Program Manager*

	Average Pre-Test Grade Equivalent	# students w/ both pre- and post-test	# students who improved	% students who improved	Average pre-test score	Average post-test score	Average Post-Test Grade Equivalent
Math	7	57	41	71.9%	226.4	230.8	10
Reading	10	52	36	69.2%	241.5	245.8	11

Table 1. CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems) Pre-test and Post-test scores in Math and Reading 2012-2014

- Results over three years and six course starts indicate consistent learning gains as measured by Accuplacer Pre-Tests and Post-Tests (as shown in Figures 1-4) and corroborated by CASAS Pre-Tests and Post-Tests (as shown in Table 1.)
- After completing the ICTP, students need an average of 1.6 fewer developmental classes, saving both time and money.
- Completion rates for the ICTP have increased from an average of 65 percent 2012-13 to an average 84 percent 2013-14.
- Of students who completed the program, 81 percent of students improved in arithmetic, 17 percent in algebra, 79 percent in reading, and 75 percent in sentence skills.
- Of students who completed the program, 40 percent of students tested college-ready in arithmetic, 18 percent in algebra, 29 percent in reading, and 34 percent in sentence skills.

### The student experience

ICTP Students were asked, while in class, “How would you describe ICTP in one sentence?” Below are selected, un-edited comments from the spring 2015 class of sixteen students, women and men of various ages, and several foreign-born.

*“ICTP staff has been very helpful, extremely knowledgeable, and makes learning fun.”*

*“ICTP has been extremely helpful, and I like how you can see your progress every class.”*

*“ICTP is my future.”*

*“ICTP has been a tremendous experience that has brought me closer to my goals. The English language is still an adventure which brings me every day new, wonderful vocabulary.”*

*“ICTP has been very helpful. I accomplished a lot, and I keep learning.”*

*“What I have learned, I love – reading, writing and improving my English.”*

*“ICTP is an awesome program and it can open many doors if you let it.”*

*“ICTP has been a tremendous experience that has brought me closer to my goals.”*

*—Student, Intensive College Transition Program*

## Best practices

Reflecting on feedback received from participating students and instructors and on the results achieved, Program Manager Silbermann identified a number of best practices:

- ICTP uses a whole student approach that pairs academic skills remediation through MyFoundationsLab with intensive advising, tutoring, and mentoring services designed to meet each student’s individual needs.
- MyFoundationsLab enables students to take command of their learning with personalized Learning Paths, abundant feedback, frequent mastery checks, and a variety of resources for assistance when needed.
- Program staff recognize that everything counts in a short-term, intensive program like ICTP. The intervention does not take place solely in a classroom but begins the moment the recruiter greets the student and extends to every interaction with program staff.
- Students are valued as individuals, always addressed by name, and treated with respect and caring.

Silbermann notes, “In a focus group of our students convened by an official with the state of Connecticut evaluating our program, students reported that they perceived themselves as part of a family. That was gratifying for us to hear.”

## Conclusion

Over three years, the Meriden/Middlesex ICTP program has delivered instruction and support services that prepare adult learners for success in college. Results achieved over six course starts pave the way for program expansion to enable more students to successfully transition to college.

School Name Southeast Community College, Lincoln, NE  
 Course Name Quick Start  
 Course Format Lab

**Key Results** Fifty-two percent of students who completed the Quick Start course with MyFoundationsLab earned college credit versus 32 percent of students in a control group without it. Ninety-one percent of all Quick Start students who retested on the COMPASS test improved their placement scores, testing out of an average 1.8 classes each and saving more than \$136,881 in tuition from May 2012 through June 2014.

#### Program director

Phip Ross, Ed.D., English Instructor

#### Course materials

MyFoundationsLab

#### Background

Southeast Community College enrolls nearly 11,000 students annually and offers more than 50 programs of study, including 12 programs entirely online. With a commitment both to help students achieve their individual potential and to increase students' employability, the college transfers or places into occupations more than 90 percent of its graduates each year yet offers the most affordable tuition and fees of all Nebraska colleges.

#### Challenges and goals

Observing that many students who scored poorly on the COMPASS placement exam would simply walk away from campus and not return, Phip Ross and his Transitions Lab staff determined to create an intervention to help students put their academic and career goals back on track. With funding from a Department of Labor grant, Ross launched the Quick Start program in 2012. Quick Start combines personalized skills remediation in MyFoundationsLab with advising, tutoring, and advocacy from Transitions Lab staff.

*“Quick Start with MyFoundationsLab aims to strengthen students’ basic skills while reinforcing the academic and social behaviors that constitute college readiness.”*

—Phip Ross, Program Director

Ross' goals for the Quick Start intervention included:

- Remediate students' academic and noncognitive readiness skills gaps to enable students to enroll at Southeast Community College.
- Accelerate students' progress into the credit-bearing courses that would help them achieve their ultimate career goals.
- Link adult education with developmental studies.

Ross states, “Students know that higher education can help them realize their career and life goals, but a low placement score often demoralizes them. Many students struggle to visualize a path beyond that obstacle. We try to counsel all students with low placement scores and build relationships with each one. Quick Start aims to strengthen students' basic skills while reinforcing the academic and social behaviors that constitute college readiness.”

*“We suspected that some of the lowest-scoring students were, in fact, fully capable of doing college-level work. The Quick Start program proves that, with modest remediation and advising, these students can outperform peers who initially scored higher on the placement exam.”*

—Phip Ross, Program Director

## Implementation

Students whose COMPASS scores place them in Pre-Foundations (less than sixth grade) or Foundations (developmental) levels of math, reading, or writing are encouraged to enroll in Quick Start. Quick Start is a noncredit continuing education course but students who enroll must register at Southeast Community College, obtaining access privileges to the Lab and the valued credential of a student ID. Students pay a fee of \$20 to commit to the Quick Start program; the fee offsets the cost of the software license.

Once enrolled, students take the MyFoundationsLab pre-diagnostic and then work independently on the modules in their personalized Learning Path. Students must complete 10 or more hours of work in MyFoundationsLab to earn a passing grade in the Quick Start course. That passing grade entitles students to retake the COMPASS exam with the \$15 fee waived.

Ross says, “We suspected that some of the lowest-scoring students were, in fact, fully capable of doing college-level work. The Quick Start program proves that, with modest remediation and advising, these students can outperform peers who initially scored higher on the placement exam.”

## Results and data

### Comparison of learner outcomes with Quick Start intervention and without Quick Start

Transitions Lab staff randomly selected two groups of students from among those who completed a Southeast Community College COMPASS test in spring, summer, or fall 2012. Students’ test scores qualified them as either Pre-Foundations (less than sixth grade) or Foundations level (developmental). The Group A Treatment cohort included 176 Quick Start students; the Group B Control cohort included 176 non-Quick Start students. Both cohorts were controlled to include 65 students with Pre-Foundations scores.

Quick Start students outperformed the control group by a significant margin, with 52 percent of Quick Start students earning credit versus 32 percent of the control group. Among the Pre-Foundations cohorts, 37 percent of Quick Start students earned credit while only 17 percent of the control group did so (Figure 1). Overall, Quick Start students earned

Cohorts (n = 176 each)	# of Students Earning Credit	Percent Earning Credit	Total Credits Attained	Tuition @ \$56.75
A: QuickStart	91/176	52%	2,004.5	\$113,755.38
B: Control	56/176	32%	1,161.0	\$65,886.75
<b>Difference</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>843.5</b>	<b>\$47,868.63</b>

Table 1. Comparison of Credits Earned by Quickstart Cohort Versus Control Cohort, Fall, Winter, and Spring 2012

Cohorts (n = 65 each)	# of Students Earning Credit	Percent Earning Credit	Total Credits Attained	Tuition @ \$56.75
A: QuickStart	24/65	37%	417	\$23,664.75
B: Control	11/65	17%	203.5	\$11,548.63
<b>Difference</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>213.5</b>	<b>\$12,116.12</b>

Table 2. Comparison of Outcomes per Subgroup of Pre-Foundations Students

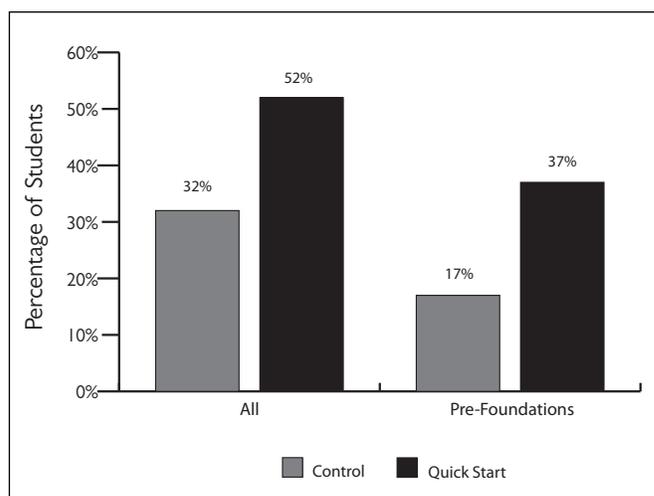


Figure 1. Percentage of All and Pre-Foundations Quick Start and Control Students Earning Credit, Fall, Winter, and Spring Quarters 2012 (All Control, n = 176; All Quick Start, n = 176; Pre-Foundations Control, n = 65; Pre-Foundations Quick Start, n = 65)

*“Quick Start absolutely prepared me for college coursework. Without the Transitions Lab, I would have shied away from college and gone back to construction. Earning a place on the Dean’s List made me more determined than ever to achieve my goals.”*

—Student

nearly twice as many credits as the control group: among the Pre-Foundations cohorts, students who completed Quick Start earned 417 credits while the control group earned only 203.5. Results from this initial study demonstrate that even the lowest-scoring students are capable of college success if afforded a modest intervention that addresses gaps in readiness.

#### **Cumulative results of Quick Start with MyFoundationsLab, May 2012–June 2014**

- A full 406 students completed Quick Start and retested on the COMPASS.
- Ninety-one percent (369 of 406 students) improved their COMPASS scores.
- Two hundred ninety-seven students tested out of 536 classes, an average of 1.81 classes per student; total tuition saved equals \$136,881 (536 classes = 2412 credit hours x \$56.75\* per credit hour) or an average of \$460.88 tuition saved per student.
- Forty-eight Quick Start students earned spots on the 2013 fall quarter Dean’s List.
- Quick Start students have earned a total of 11,254.5 credits through June 2014; at \$56.75\*/credit, these credits equal \$638,692.87 in tuition fees that may not have been realized without the Quick Start intervention.
- Forty-three Quick Start students to date have completed certificates, diplomas, or degrees.
- Quick Start students are outperforming students with similar placement scores by completing and passing courses at a rate of almost 2 to 1.

*“Quick Start students are outperforming students with similar placement scores by completing and passing courses at a rate of almost 2 to 1.”*

—Phip Ross, Program Director

## **The student experience**

### **Snapshots of two Quick Start students**

J. came to Southeast Community College seeking a career change after years in the military and construction. With Quick Start, J. improved his COMPASS writing score from a 4 to a 78 (a score of 16 or higher is needed for credit courses at Southeast Community College) and his math score from a 17 to a 37. He earned a grade of A+ in Composition I and a place on the Dean’s List.

*“I was shaky and nervous on my first day in the Transitions Lab, but the Quick Start program restored my confidence. Quick Start absolutely prepared me for college coursework. Without the Transitions Lab, I would have shied away from college and gone back to construction. Earning a place on the Dean’s List made me more determined than ever to achieve my goals.”*

K. completed the Quick Start program, raising his math score from a 23 to a 36 and his reading score from a 73 to an 82 in less than two weeks.

*“I made some mistakes—I was a felon. But I have four kids, and I need to show them something. Quick Start helped me refresh my skills, and I am now registered for college. My goals are to become an entrepreneur, open my own business, and mentor troubled youth. Thanks to the Transitions Lab, I’m ready to go. My advice to fellow students is: put in the effort, put in the hours, and you can meet your goals.”*

*“Quick Start is a great investment for the students and for the college.”*

*—Phip Ross, Program Director*

### Best practices

Ross notes, “MyFoundationsLab is really solid. The program is easy to navigate and very well designed. Even students who arrive without any prior technology experience are able to get started easily and to work independently. If students commit to working in MyFoundationsLab, they do well.”

He continues, “The human connection is vital. The Transitions Lab is a safe zone where students can address their insecurities without fear of being exposed. Every student has an advocate, or several, who know that student’s name. That advocacy bolsters students’ confidence to take risks, and each challenge met serves to increase students’ confidence. The Transitions Lab advisors and tutors know the people and processes at Southeast Community College really well. Transitions Lab staff help students navigate the campus and make connections. Advisors don’t hesitate to pick up the phone or even to walk a student to the registrar or the financial aid office. That personal investment helps students gain their bearings in the campus environment; students quickly become able to self-advocate.”

### Conclusion

The Transitions Lab at Southeast Community College was recently named a winner of the National Council of Instructional Administrators Exemplary Initiatives competition in the Curricular Program Innovation category.

Ross summarizes, “We’re taking a close look at improving student services across the college. Students need both learning technology and human resources. With Quick Start, we’re combining skilled advising and academic tutoring with personalized, just-in-time skills remediation through MyFoundationsLab. Results indicate that this model is an effective intervention to retain Foundations and Pre-Foundations students—and the cost of the program is relatively insignificant compared to the increased tuition revenues from students who matriculate and take more and more credit-bearing courses. Quick Start is a great investment for the students and for the college.”

## Lessons Learned in the Transitions Lab:

### Combining Skills Remediation with Advising Support to Help Students Acclimate, Persist, and Succeed

*By Phip Ross, Ed.D., English Instructor and Transitions Lab Program Director, Southeast Community College, Lincoln, NB*

In our cultural imagination, the greatest challenge of our epic journeys comes at the end of the story when our protagonist confronts the monster blocking the trail, faces the raging storm while clinging to the ship's wheel, struggles to pull in oxygen-thin breaths at the peak of Everest. The story builds to this final confrontation—always at the end, not at the beginning.

I disagree. The first several steps in the door, the first week, the first quarter or semester when the curtain has just risen on a college experience--this, I suggest, may be when success is most in peril. Many of us face the biggest hurdle at the moment of entry, at the beginning of our journey.

But if you remember your first day of kindergarten or that of a child of yours, stepping inside the doors for the first time is a tremendously challenging experience. Traumatizing even. Letting go of a loved one's hand and moving into a world of strangers in a place very different from home is a monumental task. No one really knows you or what your experience outside of school has been.

Children usually don't have a choice—they're going to school. Adults, as the data suggests, quite often hit the "abort" button and exit the building. They do not stick around to complete college. If you're reading this, you're likely familiar with retention and completion rates nationally or at least at your institution. They're usually not annual report-worthy numbers.

A variety of factors influence drop-out decisions. But let's just consider the kindergartner for a moment. Ideally, when a child goes to school, that child is greeted by someone who immediately demonstrates caring. This signals to the child that a few basic needs are met:

- Someone knows your name and uses it
- Someone "sees" you: knows if you're lost or need some guidance
- Someone welcomes you and lets you know that this new place is *for* you

Students entering college are not children. But they are navigating a new and, to the uninitiated, quite confusing environment. They may have been away from school for years, they may lack confidence in their skills, and they may be the first in their family to attempt higher education. They may be downright frightened.

At my college, we were noticing potential students leaving the building before we could establish any kind of relationship with them. "Cracks" between testing and career advisors allowed students opportunities to slip away. Appointments to come back were rarely kept. Some students had difficulty getting the help they needed to register and to become familiar with our learning management system. Many of these students also had low placement scores. It could be argued that the message being sent was "we don't care" or "you are not prepared for college." Instead of receiving a warm welcome, anxious students were directed down seemingly endless hallways from one impersonal office to the next. The courage it took to enter the building, take a placement test, and be directed to another stranger may have exhausted the meager reserves of confidence students arrived with.

Our Transitions Lab began in March 2012 with a commitment to practice a model of advising that welcomes students from a range of sources but mainly from our Testing Center. Our team (two part-time advisors and me) encouraged testing center technicians to walk students directly to us in the middle of our library. There, we have conversations with each student about their backgrounds, their goals, and any possible risks or obstacles. We spend about 45 minutes with students who are interested in enrolling on the spot in our non-college credit course for \$20 that provides academic skills remediation in areas the student chooses and a free placement re-test if desired. We don't have offices and we don't take appointments; students just walk up.

We can over-emphasize our numbers, such as 90% of our students who re-test improve their placement (over 550 classes have been tested out of) and Transitions students in comparison studies are out-performing their counterparts with similar placement scores. We collect a lot of quantitative and qualitative information on individuals and groups. The data suggests that what Southeast Community College has invested in is paying off for students and the college. The value for me, as an educator and as a human being, is to participate in the relational work necessary to make my college a place where students who might have reason to fear and distrust learn to feel comfortable and engage in learning and growth. Studies have shown how social class influences the ways in which students navigate or get lost in college (Stuber 2011). Some would call the work we do “hand-holding.” This ignores the educational debt that has accumulated from the social, educational, and economic history of this country (Ladson-Billings 2006). These obstacles are very real to students but may not be visible to many of us inside our own schools.

Most educators observe events we cannot explain with our own experience, like how a young student who’s raised his little sister, held jobs since he was 16, and has a good high school GPA needs to be walked to the registration desk to turn in his fall form. We can’t easily understand why this seemingly routine act is so daunting. And yet it is. That student lacked the confidence to approach one more stranger, to run one more bureaucratic gauntlet on his own. With a small assist from one of us, he will take the next remarkable step toward realizing his aspirations. Once past the hurdle, this student will persist. This transformation happens one student and one step at a time.

Here’s a sample from one of our advisor’s daily journal entries:

- Paulina is back from Mexico and ready to study. She wanted to start school in October but she is pre-foundations in writing (12) and reading (44.) She also could improve her math (PA 30) as she completed 2 years of algebra in high school. She was very interested in working with our writing and math tutors, so we may want to email the schedule out when we get it.
- He signed up for Quick Start after coming from testing. He wants to get his classes done at SCC as soon as possible so he can transfer. He is currently in math fundamentals with a 40. He will be visiting with Charles as he is a vet from New Jersey.
- Came in with his dad from Valley. He is planning to start school at Milford in Jan. either in ELEC or HVAC. He had taken the ACT so asked dad to find his scores. He needs to improve his writing (42) and math (A-26) scores to get into the programs.
- Has attempted college 3 times. Michelle brought her up as she needs to work on her math. I also noted that she should work on her writing. She is registered for ENGL0985 so will study writing right away and test next Friday. She will then study her math during the fall quarter.
- She was our student in July 2013. Since then she was diagnosed with bipolar and depression. She is on meds now and ready to start school. Kat brought Christina over. She is pre-foundations in math (19) and would also like to work on her writing score (52.) Plans to start school in January.
- Shelby just graduated in ECED but her dad transferred his military benefits to her so she is staying in school and looking into the social work program with SCC/UNO. She signed up to work on her math with us (PA37) and she needs to get through MATH 1100 (Intermediate Algebra.) Sweet girl.

When we first started this advising, it would not be uncommon for a student to stumble into our space in tears after being directed all over campus. Transitions advisors work to build relationships with all other advisors and student services staff. They have to. We’ve been given permission to move within and across these other offices, and it’s been slow going at times. But now students are getting connected and guided through the rough first stages of college. It’s a start, at least, toward making that epic first step one of many more on students’ journey in our school.

\*Placement score cut-offs for credit-level courses at SCC:  
 Math: COMPASS Pre-Algebra: 58 or above; Algebra: 36 or above; ACT 19 or above  
 English: COMPASS Writing: 52 or above; Reading: 61 or above; ACT 18 or above

School Name Salt Lake Community College, Salt Lake City, UT

Course Name Essentials of College Study

Program Format On-ground, Online

**Key Results** Module post-tests indicated learning gains across 15 of 16 course learning objectives. Average scores improved from 67 percent on the Pre-Course Diagnostic to 77 percent on the Post-Course Assessment.

**Program Coordinator**  
Ray Emmett

**Course materials**  
*Cornerstones for Community College Success* by Sherfield and Moody with MyStudentSuccessLab

### Setting

Utah's largest college, Salt Lake Community College offers open access to more than 120 areas of study and serves more than 60,000 students at 10 physical and one virtual campus. Overall, students' average age is 24 with an even percentage of male and female students. A majority of students have experienced work life before returning to school; among students taking the Essentials of College Study, the percentage of older/returning students is higher. Most students register for Essentials of College Study based on the recommendation of an adviser or a fellow student.

The Essentials of College Study course, which typically enrolls 35-40 sections per term, seeks to orient students and to prepare them for the rigors of college. The 3-credit course is designed both to foster development of specific academic skills (like time planning, study skills, and accessing college resources) and to develop students' identities as critical thinkers, life-long learners, and workplace contributors.

### Challenges and goals

In an effort to move toward data-informed continuous improvement in the Essentials of College Study course, Professor Ray Emmett reviewed institutional data from 70,000 students over the previous 10 years at Salt Lake Community College. Comparing results for students who took the Essentials of College Study course versus those who did not, Emmett found that:

- Among students whose scores were in the lowest quartile of Accuplacer results, those who took Essentials of College Study persisted better than students who did not take the course. Specifically, students who took the course did not necessarily raise their GPA but their likelihood of persisting and graduating significantly increased.
- Among students whose scores were in the highest quartile of Accuplacer results, those students who took Essentials of College Study measurably improved their GPA versus students who didn't take the course.

Emmett concluded that the Essentials of College Study course was benefitting students. But how could the course be redesigned such that all students made learning gains that resulted in higher GPAs and improved persistence/completion rates? Emmett chose to adopt MyStudentSuccessLab to enable all faculty teaching Essentials of College Study to measure and track students' learning gains.

### Implementation

Beginning in fall 2013, SLCC instituted a new common syllabus for Essentials of College Study. The standard syllabus allows experienced instructors some discretion but provides a pre-built course structure for adjuncts or instructors new to the course.

Professor Emmett states, "We first implemented MyStudentSuccessLab after changing our textbook and course structure. We customized the pre- and post-course assessment to match our learning objectives. Module tests are a combination of Cornerstones test questions and MyStudentSuccessLab content, currently given through Canvas, our LMS (Learning Management System). The peer reviewed assignments are practical applications of skills taught such as note-taking, time management, ePortfolio development, Information technology, etc."

*“We can’t rely on subjective measures to determine if students are achieving the outcomes we deem important. We want this to be a data-driven course and to make decisions about any changes to the course based on students’ actual results.”*

—Professor Ray Emett

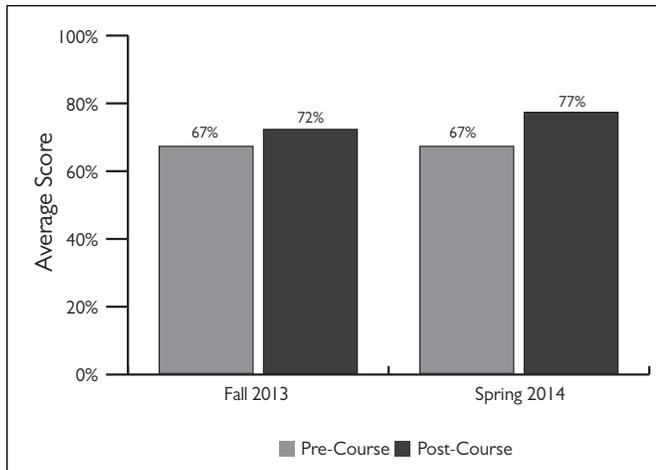


Figure 1. MyStudentSuccessLab Pre-Course Diagnostic and Post-Course Diagnostic (final exam) scores fall 2013 ( $n=396$ ) and spring 2014 ( $n=589$ )

All students are required to take the MyStudentSuccessLab Pre-Course Diagnostic to provide a baseline measurement of skills strengths and weaknesses. Class meetings are a mix of lectures and group activities. Students are expected to complete work in the assigned MyStudentSuccessLab modules independently; instructors monitor students’ progress through the MyStudentSuccessLab Gradebook. The final exam is the MyStudentSuccessLab Post-Course Assessment; Emett and his team of instructors compare the Post-Course Diagnostic scores to the Pre-Course Diagnostic scores to assess learning gains.

Professor Emett notes, “We can’t rely on subjective measures to determine if students are achieving the outcomes we deem important. We want this to be a data-driven course and to make decisions about any changes to the course based on students’ actual results.”

## Results and data

Emett says, “We look at MyStudentSuccessLab Item Analysis data to see gains student are making on specific course outcomes and to understand where students improve the

Plan: Careers/Interviewing	+22
Read: Reading Strategies	+22
Communicate: Basics	+21
Communicate: Teams	+18
Think: Critical Thinking	+15
Plan: Careers/Resume	+13
Think: Problem-Solving	+13
Study: Test-taking Skills	+12
Prioritize: Stress	+10
Prioritize: Time	+10
Change: Setting Goals	+9
Prosper: Managing Money	+9
Connect: Information Literacy	+4
Record: Listen/Note-taking	+3
Study: Memory/Studying	+2
Learn: Learning Styles	+0

Table 1. Average points increase ranked from greatest improvement to least improvement Pre-test to Post-test spring 2014 ( $n=589$ )

most and the least from the beginning to the end of the semester. After reviewing the fall 2013 results, we dedicated more time and emphasis on areas like critical thinking, test-preparation, and goal-setting where students had not shown pre- to post-test improvement. In spring 2014, students showed improvement in every skill area except Learning Styles. There were no skill areas that showed a decline. These results are much stronger than the fall 2013 results. The data tells us where to strengthen instruction in order to improve student performance.”

## Conclusion

Emett sums up, “I am happy with the data that we pulled from MyStudentSuccessLab’s pre- and post-course assessment. We use the outcomes results in our annual measurement of outcomes at SLCC, and the data will also be extremely helpful in addressing our accreditation requirements.

School Name	Norco College
Course Name	Preparatory Composition; English Composition
Course Format	On-ground, Hybrid, Online

**Key Results** 74.1 percent of students entering the accelerated Preparatory Composition pathway with Pearson Writer succeeded versus 24.6 percent of students entering the 3-course Developmental Writing sequence. Of students subsequently enrolling in English Composition, 82.7 percent of the Prep Comp students with Pearson Writer succeeded versus just 15 percent of the 3-course Developmental Writing students.

#### Course materials

Pearson Writer; Bean, Chappell & Gillam, *Reading Rhetorically*; full-length texts

#### Instructor

Melissa Bader, Associate Professor, English

#### Setting

Norco College is one of three colleges in the Riverside Community College District. Norco College serves 10,000 students annually, offering day, evening, weekend, and online access to academic and career technical programs in industry and the arts. A HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution), Norco College became the 112th and newest California community college when it received accreditation in 2010.

#### Challenges and goals

A close evaluation of five years (2002-2007) of results revealed that of 614 students who started in the lowest level of three developmental writing courses, only 92 students (15 percent) persisted to successfully complete all three levels of developmental writing and freshman composition. To alleviate the “leaky pipeline,” Norco’s English Department created Preparatory Composition (English 80), an accelerated pathway to freshman composition.

Preparatory Composition combines three levels of developmental writing into one, 6-unit class. There are no pre-requisites, and students may enter the course from any placement prior to Freshman Composition. Students are expected to read full texts, not excerpts, and to write a minimum of 10,000 words. Grades are determined by a point system with weighted categories: Essays and short writing assignments (80%); Quizzes/Tests (10%); and Discussion/participation/labs (10%). The course is focused on helping students to acquire the mindset and skills of academic readers, writers, and thinkers.

For her sections of both Preparatory Composition and Freshman Composition, Professor Melissa Bader adopted Pearson Writer. Pearson Writer contains an always-available digital handbook as well as a set of tools and resources to help students plan, draft, revise, review, edit, and track their writing assignments.

#### Implementation

Professor Bader explains, “At the start of the course, we work together in class, using the Notes feature to build a supporting paragraph and then, in reverse, we dissect a paragraph to show its constituent parts. We’ll begin with a quote from one of our required texts. We’ll paraphrase the quote and then develop a commentary. The commentary step is where we work on metacognitive skills. Students learn to ask: Who cares? Why is this important? And in just a few minutes of class work, we have developed a solid paragraph. Then we’ll do the same process in reverse. We’ll begin with a paragraph and together, identify the quote, the paraphrase, the commentary. Then students perform the same exercise in groups. This core exercise becomes the foundation for the creation of outlines (using the Outline tool in Pearson Writer) and for longer essays.”

She continues, “Once students have generated drafts or partial drafts with the Notes feature, they submit their work to Writing Review within Pearson Writer. Writing Review is superb for developing students’ critical thinking skills because it doesn’t answer questions for students. Writing Review helps students perform their own error analysis: What did I miss here? Students submit multiple drafts to Writing Review, each time strengthening both their metacognitive skills and their grasp of grammar and mechanics. My students love the Outline tool in Pearson Writer. Remarkably, most students have never created an outline before—and they don’t know where to begin. Pearson Writer makes it easy for them to see how to generate an outline from their Notes and how the outline structure reflects a writer’s strategy.”

*“I use the Notes feature of Pearson Writer in a building block approach to reveal the structure and logic of academic writing to students. What was once completely mysterious to students becomes transparent and more important, well within their grasp.”*

—Professor Melissa Bader

### Using Pearson Writer's Notes:

Each Note will have the same elements.

1. Choose a quote that you think is essential to your understanding of an idea or claim from the reading.
2. In the Title portion, put down the context or purpose for the quote. This could also be a minor claim statement.
3. Copy the quote from the book into the box for the quote.
4. Paraphrase what the quote says in your own words. Look beyond the obvious and think about the *purpose/intent* of the quote.
5. Comment on the quote. **This is your chance for commentary.** What do you think about the quote? What was the purpose? How does this part of the text reveal something about the author or the claim or the book? Talk about why this is an important part and why your reader should be interested in the quote. **This is the most important part of the assignment.** You want to make sure that "what" you are saying about the quote is linking to the ideas you will argue in your paper. Reread the first week's paper on the Rhetorical Triangle for a reminder of these parts of the argument.
6. Link the quote to your reading resource. You will only need to add the resource one time; thereafter, it should be in a pull-down menu.
7. *Save your Notes.*

The screenshot shows the 'Edit Note' window with the following content:

- Title:** There are misconceptions about extroverts and introverts.
- Source:** Cain, Susan. Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Ta
- Evidence from text (direct quote):** Extroverts are sometimes credited with being "pro-social"--meaning caring about others--and introverts disparaged as people who don't like people.
- Paraphrasing:** Extroverts are thought to be gregarious and better at making connections. Introverts are thought to be more anti-social and not liking others.
- Comment:** This is significant because it is a misconception about extroverts and introverts. There is a bad image of introverts. Wanting quiet isn't about not wanting to be interested in other people. This is an important part of changing people's ideas about introversion. If people always think others are shy, then they don't understand about the real issue. It isn't that introverts are not compassionate. Cain
- Identifier:** 102
- Group:** People Notes
- Color:** A grid of 24 color swatches.

8. When you turn in your Notes, check spelling and punctuation. You should be able to use this same format for your papers and if you are thinking ahead, you will have Notes that help build your papers.

9. Each assignment will have four or five Notes.

## Results and data

### Results highlights

- Prior to the introduction of the accelerated 3-in-one Preparatory Composition course, only 15 percent (92 of 614) of students who began in the lowest-level Developmental Writing course successfully completed English Composition in 5 years.
- From fall 2012 through fall 2014, 632 students enrolled in the accelerated Preparatory Composition course. The success rate was 61.1 percent (386/632); of the 632 total students enrolled in Prep Comp, 158 students were enrolled in the Prep Comp sections using Pearson Writer--success rate was 74.1 percent (117/158.)
- The success rate of students enrolling in English Composition following successful completion of Preparatory Composition overall 2012-2014 was 81.1 percent (172/212); students who successfully completed Prep Comp with Pearson Writer and enrolled in English Composition had a success rate in English Composition of 82.7 percent (62/75.)
- Prep Comp students succeeded in English Composition at comparable rates whether their initial placement was the lowest-level Developmental Writing course (sentence) (81.2 percent succeeded), Paragraph (84.4 percent succeeded), or Essay (88.9 percent succeeded.)

*“I found Pearson Writer very helpful, especially for research papers. Professor Bader showed us how to use the Notes feature to build our essays, paragraph by paragraph. I use all the resources in Pearson Writer, including Purdue OWL and all the built-in grammar help. I’m excited to use Pearson Writer in my history classes and even in my math classes where we do occasional writing assignments.”*

—Student, Norco College

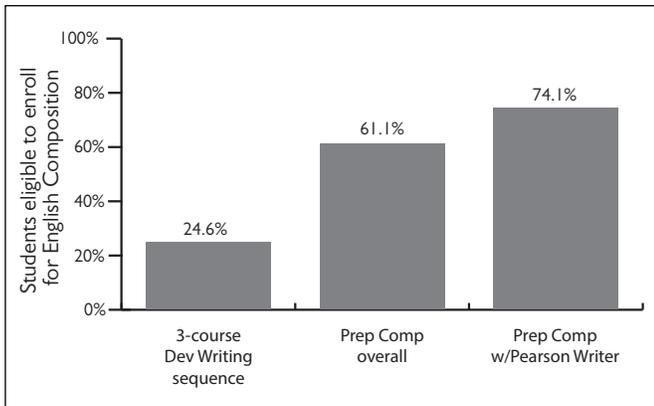


Figure 1. Comparative success rates for the 3-course Developmental Writing sequence 2002-2007 (n = 614), the accelerated Preparatory Composition course overall 2012-2014 (n = 632), and the Bader sections of Preparatory Composition 2012-2014 with Pearson Writer (n = 158.)

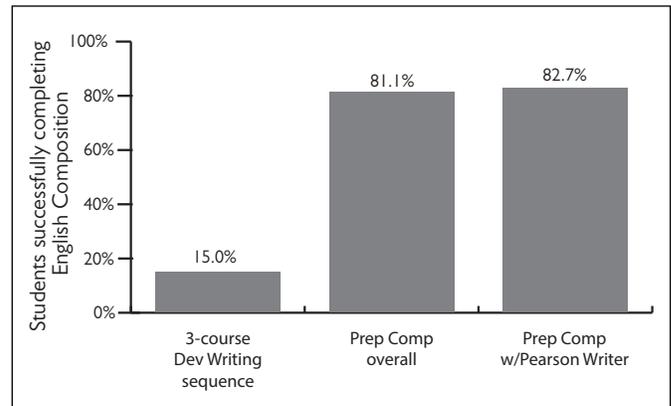


Figure 2. Comparative English Composition success rates for students who progressed to English Composition via the 3-course Developmental Writing sequence 2002-2007 (n = 614), for students who progressed to English Composition via the accelerated Preparatory Composition pathway overall 2012-2014 (n = 212), and for students who successfully completed Prep Comp with Pearson Writer and enrolled in English Composition 2012-2014 (n = 75.)

## The student experience

Four students who used Pearson Writer in both Prep Comp (on-ground) and English Comp (hybrid or online) agreed to be interviewed about their experiences. These are highlights of their comments:

### J., Norco College student

*Career aspiration: Civil engineer*

“I’m a math guy. English is not my favorite subject. But I got an A in Prep Comp, and I am currently doing very well in English Comp. I found Pearson Writer very helpful, especially for research papers. Find a Source makes it super easy to locate sources, and Citations keeps all of my source citations organized. Professor Bader showed us how to use the Notes

feature to build our essays, paragraph by paragraph. I just select a quote from my reading, paraphrase the quote, and then write a commentary. The commentary is the most important part—it’s where I make the ideas my own. I love Writing Review—it’s so helpful to get immediate feedback on my drafts. I use all the resources in Pearson Writer, including Purdue OWL and all the built-in grammar help.”

“I have friends who are struggling with research papers; they don’t know how to use citations and feel lost. I tell them, “Get Pearson Writer! Don’t use Google. Pearson Writer is way easier.”

“I’m excited to use Pearson Writer in my history classes (lots of papers to write!) and even in my math classes where we do occasional writing assignments.”

*“I loved using Pearson Writer and will continue to use what I learned. In fact, I was so inspired by Professor Bader and gained so much confidence in my writing that I am transferring to a 4-year university to pursue English Education!”*

—Student, Norco College

*“Using the Notes feature in Pearson Writer is the most effective means I’ve ever found to teach academic writing and the underlying critical thinking skills.”*

*—Melissa Bader*

**L., Norco College student**

*Career aspiration: English teacher*

“I didn’t learn how to do academic writing in high school. I had no idea how to begin or what the structure of my essays ought to be. Professor Bader made the structure of academic writing clear for the first time! She showed us how to construct Notes in Pearson Writer and to turn our Notes into essays.”

“I like all the parts of Pearson Writer and found it simple and easy to navigate. Pearson Writer made the process of writing clear. I would definitely recommend Pearson Writer to a friend.”

“Thanks to Professor Bader and my experience with Pearson Writer, I now want to be an English teacher.”

**S., Norco College student**

*Career aspiration: Veterinary technician*

“I had no confidence in my writing. Professor Bader showed us how to build essays, step by step, using the Notes feature of Pearson Writer. I loved Writing Review—it was great to get anonymous feedback on my earliest drafts. I used the feedback to revise, and when I showed my essays to Professor Bader, I found that I did better than I thought. Prep Comp helped me a lot. Pearson Writer gave me the tools, and Professor Bader helped me to be more confident in my writing.”

**T., Norco College student**

*Career aspiration: English teacher*

“Academic writing was unfamiliar and mysterious to me. Pearson Writer helped me to find reputable sources. The Notes feature helped me to build paragraphs and an outline that I built into essays. I sent my first 1 or 2 drafts to Writing Review and used the feedback to find my errors and revise. I initially tried to find sources in the library, but I didn’t have much success. On the other hand, Find a Source in Pearson Writer was easy and very helpful.”

“In Prep Comp and English Comp, I learned a lot that will carry over to my other courses. I learned how to structure my essays and how to remove fluff so that the important ideas stand out. I loved using Pearson Writer and will continue to use what I learned. In fact, I was so inspired by Professor Bader and gained so much confidence in my writing that I am transferring to a 4-year university to pursue English Education!”

**Best practices**

The rigor and pace of the accelerated Preparatory Composition requires a significant degree of motivation and discipline. Following the pilot in 2012-13, faculty and advisers redoubled their efforts to counsel students about course options and requirements in an effort to attract motivated students to enroll in Prep Composition. The percentage of students succeeding in Preparatory Composition rose from 58 percent in 2012-13 to 62.8 percent in 2013-14.

**Conclusion**

Professor Bader states, “Results indicate the accelerated Prep Comp course is a viable pathway for motivated students regardless of their initial placement. We are pleased to see students accelerating their academic progress into credit-bearing courses—and even more pleased to note significantly increased numbers of students succeeding in those credit-level courses.”

She continues, “In my own courses, Pearson Writer has transformed my teaching. Results indicate that using Pearson Writer’s Notes feature is effective for students in the accelerated Prep Comp course as well as in English Composition and English Composition Honors and for both on-ground and online classes. Students are turning in very strong essays and exhibiting a confidence in their skills that is most gratifying to witness. Most significant to me are the strong success rates across the board, from the students whose initial placement was at the lowest level of Developmental Writing all the way to Honors-level English Composition students.”

School Name **Broward College**  
 Course Name **Multiple**  
 Course Format **On-ground, Hybrid, Online**

**Key Results** Broward's analysis of spring 2015 results showed an average 84.3 percent success rate among students who used Smarthinking, across all campuses and all courses, compared to an average 66.1 percent success rate for non-users. Withdrawals among Smarthinking users were just 3.7 percent compared with 12.5 percent among non-users.

### Administrators

Noel Betts, Senior Research Associate, Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness

Eileen Garcia, Dean, Academic Affairs

Nicholas Ritchie, Senior Analyst, Student Achievement Initiatives, Developmental Education

Steve Roig-Watnik, Interim AVP, Developmental Education

David Shulman, Campus President, Broward College Online

### Setting

The first and largest higher education institution in Broward County, Florida, Broward College offers a high-quality yet affordable education to a diverse student population hailing from more than 175 countries and ranging in age from teens to 60+. Broward serves 68,000 students annually, offering Baccalaureate and Associate's degrees, technical certificates, competency-based learning, and industry credentials to students on three physical campuses and a growing virtual campus.

### Challenges and goals

Longstanding users of Smarthinking, Broward periodically evaluates the connection between student performance and students' engagement with Smarthinking tutors. A 2005 Broward research study into the effectiveness of Smarthinking concluded, "The results indicate greater success for students who received tutoring through the Smarthinking service. In an examination of the top ten courses, the Smarthinking students attained passing grades at higher rates than their college-wide counterparts, in all instances."

As its online student population expands and its student body diversifies, Broward is taking steps to promote Smarthinking and to make access to Smarthinking seamless and direct for

students within Broward's LMS. In spring 2015, Broward partnered with Pearson on an efficacy study to again evaluate the impact of Smarthinking on student performance.

### Implementation

The Broward leadership team wants to ensure that all students, whether on campus or online, have access to the full range of student support services, including Smarthinking academic tutoring. Students may access Smarthinking tutor services anytime, by clicking the link within Broward's LMS. The team also promotes Smarthinking with periodic announcements in the LMS, through posters on campus, and through faculty recommendations. A recent promotional announcement in the Broward LMS advised students that "Students who use Smarthinking are 18% more likely to be successful." This statistic derives from Broward's own ongoing efficacy research tracking the relationship between Smarthinking usage and student performance.

Dean of Academic Affairs Eileen Garcia notes, "My research in supplemental instruction informs my thinking that double exposure to concepts propels learning. Smarthinking is one of the resources we provide to give students multiple opportunities to engage with essential course content—within guided, instruction-rich environments. An added advantage of Smarthinking is that, unlike our campus tutoring centers or instructors' office hours, Smarthinking tutors are available around the clock. When students need assistance with a draft of an essay or a physics homework problem, a Smarthinking tutor is available to provide that instructional guidance."

Faculty in all disciplines are encouraged to recommend or require Smarthinking usage. Some courses have been deliberately designed to incorporate Smarthinking. For instance, all sections of Introduction to Composition (ENC 1101), a required course for freshmen, mandate that students submit drafts of three papers to Smarthinking writing tutors for review.

*“This was my first experience with Smarthinking. The paper was returned less than 5 hours after I sent it (amazing!) with a super detailed and helpful review. Thank you so much!”*

—Student

Dean Garcia states, “Targeting freshman writing courses is a deliberate strategy to provide supplemental instruction for this essential academic skill early in students’ academic programs. The Smarthinking writing tutors give students valuable feedback and guidance as they are working through first drafts. Students may find it easier to seek feedback on their early, rough drafts from a Smarthinking tutor who, while expertly trained, is distant and not responsible for assigning grades. Our composition faculty, in turn, find their grading time reduced since they receive essays that have been reviewed by Smarthinking tutors and revised by students before being submitted for grading .”

## Results and data

In collaboration with Pearson, Broward analyzed students’ spring 2015 performance, comparing results of students who used Smarthinking tutoring to results of students who did not use Smarthinking tutoring:

### Course Success Rates Spring 2015: All courses (developmental and college-level), All campuses

	Percent Success	Percent Non-Success	Percent Withdrawals
Smarthinking	84.3	12.0	3.7
Non-Smarthinking	66.1	21.4	12.5

Table 1. Course success rates (both developmental and college-level) spring 2015 among students who used Smarthinking ( $n = 2,080$ ) and students who did not use Smarthinking ( $n = 17,260$ )

- Success-Students who received a grade of A, B, C, or S
- Non-Success-Students who received a grade of D, F, or U
- Withdrawals-Students who received a grade of W

### College-level Course Success Rates Spring 2015: All campuses, all Smarthinking courses

	Percent Success	Percent Non-Success	Percent Withdrawals
Smarthinking	84.5	11.7	3.8
Non-Smarthinking	66.0	21.3	12.8

Table 2. Course success rates spring 2015 among students who used Smarthinking ( $n = 1,965$ ) and students who did not use Smarthinking ( $n = 16,527$ )

### Developmental Course Success Rates Spring 2015: All campuses, all Smarthinking courses

	Percent Success	Percent Non-Success	Percent Withdrawals
Smarthinking	81.7	16.5	1.7
Non-Smarthinking	67.9	24.4	7.6

Table 3. Course success rates spring 2015 among students who used Smarthinking ( $n = 115$ ) and students who did not use Smarthinking ( $n = 733$ )

### Course Success Rates Spring 2015: All campuses, Top 12 courses

	Percent Success	Percent Non-Success	Percent Withdrawals
Smarthinking	75.2	18.7	6.1
Non-Smarthinking	56.1	28.1	15.7

Table 4. Course success rates spring 2015 among students who used Smarthinking ( $n = 625$ ) and students who did not use Smarthinking ( $n = 6,484$ )

### Course Success Rates spring 2015: All campuses, All courses, by number of Smarthinking visits

Percent success 1 visit	45.7
Percent success 2-5 visits	44.3
Percent success 6-10 visits	5.7
Percent success 11+ visits	4.3

Table 5. Percentage of successful students spring 2015 who used Smarthinking ( $n = 1754$ ) by number of of Smarthinking visits

### Students’ Average Term GPA spring 2015: All campuses

	All Courses	College Level	Developmental	Top 12 Courses
Smarthinking	2.86	2.88	2.68	2.62
Non-ST	2.43	2.43	2.27	2.20
Difference	0.43	0.45	0.41	0.42

Figure 6. Students’ average term GPA spring 2015 among students who used Smarthinking ( $n = 2,080$ ) and students who did not use Smarthinking ( $n = 17,260$ )

*“The tutor did not solve the statistics problem for me but made sure I knew how to solve it myself. Now I understand exactly where I went wrong.”*

—Student

In a review of the data, Broward’s leadership team noted that:

- Similar to the findings of the 2005 research into Smarthinking’s impact, the spring 2015 results suggest increased success rates among students who used Smarthinking versus non-ST users; these results appeared consistent:
  - across all physical campuses and among online students
  - for both developmental and college-level courses
  - for the Top 12 courses (Principles of Accounting, General Biology, Human Anatomy & Physiology, Computer Internet & Literacy, Chemistry for Health Sciences, General Chemistry A, General Chemistry I, Composition I, College Algebra, Trigonometry, Intermediate Algebra, Statistics)
- Among Smarthinking users who achieved success, 90 percent achieved success with only 1 to 5 Smarthinking engagements. Further research, including an investigation into students’ access of all tutoring resources, both on-campus and Smarthinking, will be needed, but these results suggest that a modest tutoring intervention may impact overall student success.
- Withdrawals among Smarthinking users, across all campuses and all courses, were 3.7 percent compared with 12.5 percent withdrawals among non-users.
- Average term GPA among Smarthinking users, across all courses and all campuses, was 2.86 versus 2.43 among non-ST users, suggesting an average difference of 0.43 or nearly equivalent to half a letter grade.

## The student experience

95 percent of Broward Smarthinking survey respondents reported that they would recommend Smarthinking to a friend

### Sample Broward student comments:

“I had an awesome experience. Now I understand how to work my algebra problems!”

“My tutor answered all my algebra questions and made learning fun.”

“I hate having to go and speak to someone about how terrible my writing is. But with Smarthinking, I can get the help I need without the shame of feeling like a bad writer.”

“I came in confused and in a matter of minutes my tutor was able to explain what I needed. The best part is that I was encouraged to do it myself. Awesome!”

“My tutor’s advice regarding thesis improvement and sentence structure will really help me with future essays.”

“My tutor pointed out the areas I needed to fix, and I feel more confident as I start writing my final draft.”

“My tutor did a fantastic job reviewing my nursing essay for clinical content. In addition, she provided insightful feedback on how to improve the overall quality of my essay. I truly appreciate her professional assistance and would recommend Smarthinking to other students.”

“I don’t know why I ever hesitated to use Smarthinking. I literally needed one little nudge in the right direction, and the problem was solved.”

*“The tutor’s feedback was spot on per my teacher. Great job. Because of my revising, I made my paper stronger and received an A.”*

—Student

## Conclusion

The Broward leadership team identified questions for possible further research:

- the optimal number of Smarthinking visits to positively impact student success
- the individual topics within courses for which Smarthinking tutoring is most helpful

The Broward leadership team was pleased to note:

- overall higher student success (passing with an A, B, C, or S) rates among students who used Smarthinking tutors versus students who did not use Smarthinking tutors
- significantly lower withdrawal rates among Smarthinking users compared to non-users
- success rate achieved with a relatively modest intervention (1-5 Smarthinking visits)
- evidence that more students are accessing Smarthinking, indicating that efforts to promote Smarthinking through faculty advocacy and direct-to-student marketing are showing success.

## 10 Best Practices to Implementing Digital Learning Solutions

The institutions profiled here did more than simply add a new learning technology to their curricula. How they integrated a Pearson digital learning solution contributed significantly to their positive results. Here are ten recommended best practices to help you achieve your goals.

### 1. Identify the problems you want to solve.

Establish clear educational goals and then specifically design your implementation to achieve them.

### 2. Choose the course materials that best fit your goals.

Assign the specific features that will help you achieve your intended outcomes.

### 3. Determine how you will measure success.

What are the quantifiable goals you want to achieve? Pertinent metrics might include increased exam scores, readiness for credit-level courses, improved retention rates, success in subsequent courses, successful completion or transfer.

### 4. Get everyone—and keep everyone—on the same page.

Communicate your goals clearly to colleagues, students, and administrators. Train all full-time instructors, part-time instructors, adjuncts, tutors, and other key players—and create opportunities for ongoing training.

### 5. Start small.

Integrate a new learning technology at a pace that feels comfortable. When you're ready, require more assignments and activities.

### 6. Position students for success.

Require work in the digital learning solution as a significant part of students' overall course grade. Clearly communicate course expectations. And conduct a "Getting Started" orientation on the first day of class to show students how to access course content and assignments.

### 7. Connect and engage with students.

Engage proactively with students—even before they ask questions. Consider sending weekly emails communicating kudos for those doing well and offering support and intervention to those who need assistance.

### 8. Employ personalized learning.

Personalization and immediate feedback engage students in active learning and enhance and inform assessment.

### 9. Conduct frequent assessments.

Digital solutions enable you to easily deploy frequent, low stakes assessments, giving students an immediate measure of their mastery and providing you with earlier, more frequent opportunities to intervene before a student falls too far behind.

### 10. Track learning gains.

Educators who consistently track and measure learning gains are able to make informed decisions about course transformations, redesigns, or program shifts and can offer evidence of institutional effectiveness, meet accreditation standards, and report on continuous improvement accomplishments.

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